

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00222 241417Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----118560 241417Z /43

O 241255Z JAN 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALM
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0095
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0222

EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADORS FROM ATHERTON

DEPARTMENT FOR SAUNDERS (INR)

USDEL NO. 7

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, XF, US
SUBJECT: INFORMAL CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING

REF: SECTO 1044 SENT FROM JERUSALEM JANUARY 19, 1978

1. REFTEL SAID I WOULD TRY TO GIVE YOU A BETTER READING EARLY
THIS WEEK ON POSSIBILITIES FOR HOLDING INFORMAL CHIEFS OF MISSION
MEETING IN AMMAN THIS SATURDAY, JANUARY 28. THE PROSPECTS NOW
LOOK REASONABLY GOOD, AND I SUGGEST WE ALL CONTINUE TO
MAKE PLANS ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT SUCH A MEETING
WILL BE POSSIBLE.

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2. FOR SAUNDERS: I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR FINDING
AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO MENTITN AGAIN TO THE SECRETARY
THAT PLANNING IS GOING FORWARD FOR CHIEFS OF
MISSION MEETING INVOLVING ADDRESSEE POSTS IN AMMAN
THIS SATURDAY. WHEN I ORIGINALLY MENTIONED
THIS IDEA TO THE SECRETARY, HE THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD
IDEA, BUT I WANT TO BE SURE THAT HE HAS FOCUSED

ON THE FACT THAT THE IDEA IS BECOMING A REALITY AND HIS KEY AMBASSADORS, AS WELL AS MYSELF, AND MEMBERS OF DELEGATION WILL BE AWAY FROM POSTS FOR THIS PERIOD. IF NEGOTIATING SITUATION REQUIRES IT (E.G., IF IT SHOULD DEVELOP THAT I HAVE TO BE IN CAIRO), WE CAN OF COURSE ALWAYS ABORT MEETING AS LATE AS THURSDAY EVENING. I BELIEVE THAT A MEETING NOW WILL BE PARTICULARLY TIMELY IN HELPING ASSURE WE ARE ALL ON SAME WAVELENGTH AND IN STIMULATING IDEAS ABOUT WHERE THE AREA AND OUR EFFORTS ARE GOING AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE REVIEWING OUR STRATEGY IN LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEGOTIATING SITUATION. MEETING WILL ALSO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE IDEAS ABOUT SUCH RELATED PROBLEMS AS THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON. ASSUMING THE MEETING IS HELD AS PLANNED, I WOULD, OF COURSE, WELCOME ANY THOUGHTS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT WHAT WE MIGHT MOST USEFULLY FOCUS ON. FINALLY, THERE IS QUESTION OF PRESS GUIDANCE. I WOULD PROPOSE THAT WE MAKE NO ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE MEETING AND RESPOND TO ANY PRESS INQUIRIES AS FOLLOWS: "ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIS PRESENCE IN THE AREA TO MEET INFORMALLY WITH THE AMERICAN AMBASSADORS FROM THE IMMEDIATE AREA FOR AN INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION AND U.S. POLICY WITH
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RESPECT TO OUR ROLE IN HELPING TO CONTINUE THE PEACE PROCESS. SUCH MEETINGS ARE NOT UNUSUAL AND HAVE BEEN HELD FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE PAST -- FOR EXAMPL, SECRETARY VANCE HAS MET WITH OUR AMBASSADORS ON TWO OF HIS TRIPS TO THE MIDDLE EAST."

3. IN ANSWER TO FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER THE MEETING IS OCCASIONED BY THE SUSPENSION OF THE JERUSALEM POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND A NEW INITIATIVE TO BE LAUNCHED BY THE USG FOR MOVING THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD, WE SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING: "THE MEETING IS NOT A RESULT OF THE SUSPENSION OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN JERUSALEM. IT WAS PLANNED BEFORE THAT HAPPENED. IT WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS CURRENT U.S. POLICY, AND ANY IDEAS THAT EMERGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED TO WASHINGTON, WHICH IS WHERE THE POLICY IS DETERMINED."

4. I WOULD WELCOME ANY THOUGHTS YOU MAY HAVE ON THIS PROPOSED PRESS GUIDANCE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MISSION CHIEFS MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JERUSA00222
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780035-0621
Format: TEL
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780130/aaaaazbe.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 70eb24e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 SECTO 1044
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3726369
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INFORMAL CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING
TAGS: PGOV, OGEN, XF, US
To: AMMAN BEIRUT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/70eb24e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014